

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 MMO-04 PER-05 SS-15 SP-02
COME-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 ABF-01 /052 W
-----095342 130121Z /64
R 120852Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5726

UNCLAS AMMAN 3317

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ECON, APER, JO
SUBJECT: NEED FOR COMMERICAL OFFICER POSITION IN AMMAN

REF: 1977 AMMAN 8083

1. AS DEPARTMENT NEARS DECISION ON RELATIVE NEEDS OF VARIOUS POSTS THAT MAY BE UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR RE-PROGRAMMED COMMERICAL OFFICER POSITIONS, WE SUBMIT FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT OUR E/C SECTION. WE HOPE THIS INFORMATION WILL BE USEFUL CONTRIBUTION TO DEPARTMENT DECISION PROCESS.

2. AT PRESENT, COMMERICAL OFFICE IS BARELY ABLE TO HANDLE INCREASE IN ROUTINE WORK THAT HAS TAKEN PACE SINCE LATE 1975 WHEN THE THEN SEPARATE ECONOMIC AND COMMERICAL FUNCTIONS WERE BROUGHT TOGETHER INTO SINGLE SECTION WITH ECONOMIC OFFICER AS CHIF. THE FOLLOWING STATISTICS ARE ILLUSTRATIVE OF CHANGED SITUATION.

	1975	1977
RESIDENT AMERICAN BUSINESS OFFICER IN AMMAN	5	36
VISITORS TO THE COMMERICAL OFFICE	549	1237
OUTGOING ECON/COML TELEGRAMS	116	477
WTDR'S SENT OUT	35	73

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ECON/COML AIRGRAMS	35	45
TRADE OPPORTUNITIES DEVELOPED	5	18

3. MISSION HAS NO CURRENT COMMERICAL ACTIVITY PLANNING DOCUMENT. OUR FIRST INFORMAL ATTEMPT, MADE IN EARLY 1976, WAS ABANDONED HEN IT BECAME APPARENT THAT THE COMMERICAL OFFICE WOULD BE UNABLE TO DO MUCH MORE THAN

RESPOND TO OUTSIDE REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE.
(IN THIS SITUATION, PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION
OF CAP OR CCP IS COMPLETELY OUT OF QUESTION.)
INTERPRETIVE REPORTING ON COMMERCIAL PROSPECTS AND
ACTIVITY AND BUSINESS CLIMATE AND OPPORTUNITIES HAS
BEEN PREPARED BY ECONOMIC OFFICER OR, IT HAS BEEN DEFERRED
INDEFINITELY. TWO SUCH PROJECTS, INCLUDED IN THE
MISSION STATEMENT OF "GOALS AND OBJECTIVES" HAVE NOT YET
BEGUN. ADDITION OF A COMMERCIAL OFFICE WOULD
PERMIT DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A COUNTRY
COMMERCIAL STRATEGY, ALLOW PURSUIT OF THE MISSION
COMMERCIAL OBJECTIVES AND FREE THE ECONOMIC OFFICER
FROM MOST OF HIS PRESENT COMMERCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES
TO CONCENTRATE MORE FULLY ON OUR ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES
(SINCE EARLY 1976, OUR LEVEL OF ECONOMIC REPORTING
HAS REMAINED APPROXIMATELY CONSTANT, BUT COMMERCIAL
AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS NOW REPRESENT 2/3 OF THE
ECONOMIC OFFICER'S OUTGOING TELEGRAPHIC TRAFFIC).

4. TWO MISSION OBJECTIVES WHICH ARE RESPONSIBILITY
OF ECON OFFICER REQUIRE THAT HE BE AVAILABLE FULLTIME
TO CONCENTRATE ON ECONOMICS. HOWEVER, IN ADDITION
TO PREPARING ALL INTERPRETIVE COMMERCIAL MATERIAL,
HE ALSO HAS VIRTUALLY SOLE RESPONSIBILITY, AND VERY
LIMITED TIME, FOR CARRYING OUT THE MISSION RESPONSIBILITIES
REGARDING THE ARAB BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL, WHICH
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SHOULD BE A COMMERCIAL OFFICER'S FUNCTION. WEAKNESS
IN STAFFING OF COMMERCIAL OFFICE THEREFORE COM-
PROMISES OUR ABILITY TO ACHIEVE NO LESS THAN FOUR
STATED MISSION OBJECTIVES AND TO PERFORM STANDARD
COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY PLANNING EXERCISE.

5. INFORMATION COMPILED BY DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE IN-
DICATES THAT FOR FIRST NINE MONTHS OF 1977 JORDAN'S
IMPORTS FROM UNITED STATES ARE RUNNING 27 PERCENT HIGHER
THAN FOR SAME PERIOD IN 1976, WHEN TOTAL IMPORTS
FROM U.S. EQUALLED \$234 MILLION. WE DO NOT WISH
TO SUGGEST THAT JORDAN IS OR WILL BECOME HIGHLY
IMPORTANT US MARKET, BUT SURELY IT IS WORTH MORE
ACTIVE INTEREST ON PART OF US THAN IT IS NOW GIVEN.
IT MAY ALSO BE WORTH NOTING THAT STARTING IN 1975,
WEST GERMANY DISPLACED US AS JORDAN'S PRIMARY TRADING
PARTNER.

6. FINALLY, BECAUSE OF LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY'S
INTEREST AND INFLUENCE IN POLITICAL LIFE AND ECONOMIC
POLICY DECISIONS IN JORDAN, INCREASED ATTENTION TO
THIS SECTOR OF JORDANIAN SOCIETY WOULD SUPPORT OTHER

SUBSTANTIVE ACTIVITIES OF MISSION.

7. REQUEST APPROVAL FOR ADDITION OF COMMERICAL OFFICER SLOT
AT 0-5 LEVEL, WITH ARRIVAL OF INCUMBENT THIS SUMMER.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONNEL
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978AMMAN03317
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780158-0134
Format: TEL
From: AMMAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780467/aaaaceyv.tel
Line Count: 121
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 8e8b61b2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2999470
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEED FOR COMMERICAL OFFICER POSITION IN AMMAN
TAGS: ECON, APER, AMGT, JO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8e8b61b2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014